

President's International Education Initiative Expanded Education for the World's Poorest Children Mali Fact Sheet

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Education Overview

Mali's social, economic, and democratic goals rely upon human capacity generated by its education system. Only an estimated 29% of adults in Mali are literate (21% of women) and half of school-aged children attend school (enrollment in 2005-6 was 56%, 49% for girls). Access to public schooling cannot meet demand, with the result that 38% of students attend private, community-managed or Islamic schools.

Key Elements of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI)

The Malian Government's ten-year FTI plan was endorsed in 2006. A Partnership Framework was signed by most major donors, including the French, Canadians, Germans, UNDP, UNICEF, and the World Bank, and monthly coordination meetings are hosted by Mali's Ministry of Education (MOE). The U.S. plays a leadership role in technical working groups on Basic Education and Education Systems Management and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) promotes FTI goals through programs aimed at reinforcing Mali's capacity to engage in strategic decentralized planning and decision-making, with a particular focus on increasing access to education for rural students, girls, and other marginalized populations. The other donors in the education sector include Canada, the Netherlands, France, the World Bank, the UN and the African and Islamic Development Banks. Mali is scheduled to receive an \$8.7 million allocation from the FTI Catalytic Fund. The Fast Track Initiative was created in 2002 as a partnership between developing countries and donors to accelerate the delivery of universal primary education in the world's poorest countries.

Current Program

USAID is committed to implementing its education program as part of the donor harmonized education sector investment initiative to support the Government of Mali's ten-year plan. The program works to increase demand for education through improved, more relevant schooling for girls and boys, by addressing their needs through gender-conscious curriculum and teacher training and by training ministry personnel in regional and district education offices to better plan and implement programs through data analysis, prioritization and careful monitoring of investment impact. USAID mobilizes communities to manage and advocate effectively for their public, community and Islamic schools that teach a secular curriculum. In addition, teacher training is supported in six Teacher Training Colleges and 296 school-based Communities of Learning. The United States promotes information technology such as community tele-centers and interactive radio instruction programs designed for broadcast directly into Malian classrooms. USAID also provides adult literacy training under its community strengthening activities and scholarships to girls in Mali under the Presidential Africa Education Initiative.

Illustrative Next Steps of the New Initiative

Under the additional support provided under the new initiative, USAID could expand the Mali basic education portfolio from 700 primary schools into a nation-wide program benefiting over 6,500 primary schools, 24,000 teachers, and 1.3 million primary school students. The new initiative could allow USAID to expand the pilot "Teacher Training via Radio" program into a national interactive radio instruction program benefiting all teachers and students in Grades 1-6. USAID could expand instructional support to Mali's 12 teacher-training institutes. To promote FTI, USAID could work with the MOE to improve access to educational opportunities for underserved populations such as rural students, girls and nomadic populations.